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Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/NE:JJCROWLEY:SK
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S/S- MR. ORTIZ
---------- 063608
R 092125Z MAR 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 057176

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IC, UK, NO, NATO

SUBJECT:UK-ICELAND FISHERIES DISPUTE

1. IN MEETING ON MARCH 8 WITH BRITISH EMBOFFS SCOTT AND WALKER, VINE WAS ASKED IF USG WAS FULLY INFORMED REGARDING LATEST NORWEGIAN EFFORTS TO MEDIATE IN COD WAR. VINE REPLIED THAT WHILE WE KNEW OF THESE EFFORTS THROUGH OUR EMBASSY IN OSLO, WE WERE NOT AWARE OF THE PRECISE DETAILS. IN ANY CASE, THE USG WAS GRATIFIED BY AND SUPPORTED THE NORWEGIAN INITIATIVE TO FIND SOME BASIS ON WHICH TO BRING THE DISPUTANTS BACK TO THE BARGAINING TABLE.

2. VINE WENT ON TO EMPHASIZE THE GENUINE CONCERN WITH WHICH NORWAY, GIVEN ITS GEOGRAPHIC POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION, VIEWED THE CONTINUED ANTAGONISM BETWEEN TWO NATO ALLIES, AND THE CONSEQUENT THREAT TO THE NATO BASE IN ICELAND. WALKER NOTED THAT BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN OSLO HAS BEEN SENDING IN REGULAR REPORTS REFLECTING NORWEGIAN WOR-
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3. VINE ALSO STRESSED THAT THE USG DOES UNDERSTAND THE BRITISH PROBLEM OF BEING OBLIGED TO DEAL WITH A WEAK AND INDECISIVE COALITION GOVERNMENT IN ICELAND. ON THE OTHER HAND, ANY OTHER FORESEEABLE GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO BE JUST

AS WEAK OR WEAKER, AND PROBABLY MORE HOSTILE TO NATO.

4. SCOTT AFFIRMED THAT HMG WOULD REQUIRE A FIRM NEGOTIATING PROPOSAL FROM THE ICELANDERS IN ORDER TO MOVE TALKS FORWARD. VINE OBSERVED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR THE PRESENT ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT TO MAKE A FIRM PROPOSAL SO LONG AS THE FRIGATES REMAINED IN THE AREA. KISSINGER

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